Doctor who saw JFK says he was shot from front

Associated Press

DALLAS — A doctor who was part of Parkland Memorial Hospital's trauma team on the days President Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald died there says Kennedy's fatal head wound had to come from the front.

Dr. Charles Crenshaw is breaking a 29-year silence about the assassination in interviews with two nationally televised programs.

Crenshaw, who heads the surgery department at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, was to appear this week on the syndicated program "Now It Can Be Told" and on ABC's "20-20."

His book, "JFK: Conspiracy of Silence," is to be published next week.

Crenshaw was a third-year resident at Parkland when Kennedy was brought there Nov. 22, 1963.

In a transcript of the "20-20" interview, he said he looked at Kennedy's wounds before "we placed him in the coffin."

"I wanted to know and remember this for the rest of my life," he said. "And the rest of my life I will always know that he was shot from the front."

The Warren Commission, which investigated Kennedy's assassination, concluded the president was killed by Oswald and that Oswald fired the fatal shot from behind Kennedy's passing motorcade.

The commission never called Crenshaw to testify, and the doctor said he was afraid to speak out before.

Two days after Kennedy died, Oswald was rushed to the hospital after being shot by nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

As Oswald was being treated, Crenshaw said he took a telephone call from President Johnson.

"All of a sudden this voice like God comes across. 'This is Lyndon Johnson.' And he said, 'How is the accused assassin doing?' I said, 'Well, he's holding his own. He's critical. He's lost a great amount of blood. We hope we can save him,' " Crenshaw said.

"He said, 'Would you take a message to the operating surgeon?' I said, 'Sure.' He said, 'I want a deathbed statement from the assassin.' And all of a sudden the line was broken."

The "Now It Can Be Told" interview originally was scheduled for broadcast next Monday, but program spokesman Jeff Erdel said it was rescheduled for this week after officials learned that "20-20" planned to air the interview Friday night.